

Proclamation 6432 of May 8, 1992

Infant Mortality Awareness Day, 1992

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In recent years, our Nation has made significant and encouraging progress in its efforts to improve the health of mothers and infants. The Department of Health and Human Services reports that, in 1991, the infant mortality rate was 8.9 deaths per 1,000 live births—the lowest ever recorded and a continued decline from previous years. This decrease can be attributed to a number of factors, including advances in science and technology, which have enabled us to save the lives of babies who are born prematurely or who develop dangerous conditions while still in the womb.

While we are justly proud of these advances and of the excellent standards of care provided in our Nation's neonatal intensive care units, we know that there is still much work to do. Several important indicators of maternal and child health, such as incidence of low birth weight and receipt of prenatal care, have not shown desired improvements. Moreover, the percentage of babies born to teenage mothers and the number of pregnant women who used one or more illegal substances during their pregnancies have increased. On this occasion, therefore, we renew our commitment to promoting maternal and child health—beginning with high quality prenatal care throughout pregnancy.

Although government cannot fulfill the primary responsibility of parents in caring for their children, officials at the Federal, State, and local levels have been working with health care professionals and other members of the private sector to help pregnant women protect the lives of their unborn children through proper nutrition and prenatal care. Prenatal care is especially important for women who are at increased medical or social risk. Today, for example, black infants have twice the risk of dying before their first birthday than do white infants. By expanding access to quality prenatal care and other family support services, we will alleviate tremendous human suffering and ensure that every child receives the best possible start in life. In addition, because the cost of preventive care is much less than the cost of caring for infants with low birth weight and other health problems, our efforts have the potential to produce substantial economic savings.

As part of our national campaign to improve maternal and child health, we have launched the Healthy Start program, a pilot project designed to bring needed information and services to pregnant women and to cut existing rates of infant mortality by half in 15 high-risk areas. Elements of the Healthy Start program include education about healthy life-styles, improved transportation to clinics and other medical facilities, the pooling of services to provide "one-stop shopping" for care, and smoking and drug abuse cessation programs. Our goal is to develop innovative programs that work, and then replicate them in other American communities. At the same time, we continue to promote public awareness of ways that each of us can help to improve maternal and child health in the United States.

As an expression of our Nation's commitment to further progress in the fight against infant mortality, the Congress, by House Joint Resolution

425, has designated May 10, 1992, as "Infant Mortality Awareness Day" and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 10, 1992, as Infant Mortality Awareness Day. I urge all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6433 of May 11, 1992

National Trauma Awareness Month, 1992

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Each year traumatic injury strikes almost one in four Americans, tragically ending the lives of some 150,000 people and afflicting millions more with temporary or permanent disabilities. This devastating loss of human life and potential is all the more regrettable because it is often preventable. In most instances, traumatic injury can be avoided; and when trauma does strike, its impact on individuals can be greatly reduced through proper treatment and rehabilitation.

While each of us is a potential trauma victim, young people are particularly vulnerable. The Department of Health and Human Services reports that traumatic injuries cause more childhood deaths than all diseases combined and account for 80 percent of all deaths among adolescents. Among all age groups, young adults who are between 25 and 44 years old account for the highest number of fatal traumatic injuries—some 50,000 deaths annually.

The economic costs of traumatic injury, including health care expenses and lost productivity, total in the tens of billions of dollars each year. We cannot, however, even begin to measure the sum of personal pain and suffering that are experienced by victims and their families.

Fortunately, the threat of traumatic injury can be reduced significantly when we use common sense and apply well-established safety precautions. We have, for example, witnessed an encouraging decline in deaths due to motor vehicle collisions—the leading cause of fatal trauma—since Americans began to increase their use of safety belts and to lower their intake of alcohol. Our success in reducing fatal motor vehicle collisions is but one indication of how much we have learned about preventing traumatic injuries.

We have also learned that, when serious traumatic injuries do occur, rapid transport, prompt treatment, and early rehabilitation of the victim provide the best means of minimizing physical, emotional, and financial costs. Thus, our Nation is indebted to the thousands of professionals and volunteers who serve on the front lines of trauma care: the